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The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East

The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Note verbale dated 10 April 2007 from the Permanent Mission of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General and has the honour to request that the final document of the twenty-seventh session of the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council, held in Riyadh on 9 and 10 December 2006, be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda items 13, 14, 87, 93 and 100.

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Annex to the note verbale dated 10 April 2007 from the Permanent Mission of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic]

Final communiqué of the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its twenty-seventh session held in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on 18 and 19 Dhu'lqa`dah A.H. 1427, corresponding to 9 and 10 December A.D. 2006

"The Sheikh Jaber Summit"

In response to the gracious invitation of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, King of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Supreme Council held its twenty-seventh session in Riyadh in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on 18 and 19 Dhu'lqa`dah A.H. 1427, corresponding to 9 and 10 December A.D. 2006, under the chairmanship of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, King of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Chairman of the current session of the Supreme Council. The session was attended by:

His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates

His Majesty King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain

His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said, Sultan of Oman

His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar

His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait

His Excellency Mr. Abdul Rahman bin Hamad Al-Attiyah, Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) also took part in the meeting.

The Supreme Council expressed its profound sorrow and grief over the death of His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the late Amir of the State of Kuwait, may God have mercy on his soul, who passed away after a life full of glorious deeds, great achievements, genuine giving and sincere, tireless work for the benefit, progress and prosperity of the State of Kuwait and the welfare of its people. The Council offered its sincere condolences and sympathy to the leadership, Government and people of Kuwait, as well as to the Arab and Islamic communities for this great loss. The Council also expressed its genuine appreciation for the role played by the departed in strengthening the GCC and the considerable contribution that he made with his fellow leaders of the GCC States to its establishment and for his great efforts, may he rest in peace, in the service of Arab and Islamic causes and the promotion of regional and world peace.

The Supreme Council welcomed His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait, may God preserve him, who embodies the continuation of a legacy of development, benevolence, strength and progress for the State of Kuwait and its beloved people and, also, with his fellow leaders of the GCC States, of the continued strengthening of the GCC and

realization of its lofty goals, the preservation of its security and reinforcement of its principles to ensure the stability and prosperity of the peoples of the region.

The Council reviewed the paper presented by the State of Kuwait concerning current regional and international challenges and commended the proposals, visions and ideas contained therein for promoting joint action by the GCC States. The General Secretariat directed the Secretariat to study the paper and submit a clear plan, with specific programmes and a time frame for their implementation, to the next session of the Supreme Council.

The Supreme Council reviewed achievements in joint action in all fields since the previous session and conducted a comprehensive evaluation of regional and international political issues, events and security matters in the light of the momentous events and rapid developments taking place in the region and the world.

In keeping with the desire of the leaders of the GCC States to promote broader and more comprehensive cooperation, the Supreme Council reviewed the recommendations and follow-up reports submitted by the Ministerial Council and took the necessary decisions with regard to them, as follows:

The Supreme Council discussed the progress of the GCC in the economic sphere based on the recommendations and reports submitted to it by the competent Ministerial committees and the Secretariat.

The Supreme Council discussed the progress of the Customs Union, the steps taken to fulfil its requirements and the positive impacts that the Customs Union has had on facilitating the movement of goods between GCC States and the considerable increase in mutual commercial exchange. The Council approved the uniform guidelines on control measures for foodstuffs imported via GCC State entry points, which was one of the requirements of the Customs Union.

The Supreme Council surveyed the steps taken by member States towards implementation of the plan for a GCC common market and their achievements in that regard during 2006, particularly in the area of engagement in economic activities and the implementation of Council decisions relating to the common market. The Council approved the agreement made, with its authority, by the Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee to allow nationals of GCC States to engage in the following economic activities in all GCC States: insurance services, following up government agencies, and transportation. It directed the relevant committees to conclude all the formalities necessary for the establishment of the Gulf common market expeditiously before the end of the following year, in implementation of directives issued at its previous sessions that the inauguration of the common market should be announced at the end of 2007.

The Supreme Council reviewed the report of the Secretariat on steps taken to implement the timetable for the establishment of a GCC monetary union and issuing a uniform currency. It charged the Committee on Financial and Economic Cooperation and the Committee of Governors of Monetary Agencies and Central Banks with completing a study of the means whereby the financial and monetary criteria for economic convergence and the relevant percentages were calculated and mandated the Ministers of Finance to reach agreement on this. It also directed the relevant committees to redouble their efforts to complete these steps and reach agreement on the regulations and documents necessary for the establishment of a

monetary union and issuance of a uniform currency for the GCC States in accordance with the aforementioned timetable.

The Supreme Council adopted the GCC Trademarks Law as a mandatory regulation governing registered trademarks, registration procedures, duration of trademark protection, cancellation procedures and transfer of ownership.

The Supreme Council reviewed the report on the "smart card" project and status of the project in the various GCC States. It directed that the card be used for the purposes of movement between GCC States and instructed the relevant ministerial committees to take the necessary implementation measures.

The Supreme Council monitored the progress made on the detailed study on the economic feasibility of the proposed interconnection of water systems among GCC States, emphasizing its strategic importance, and a study on the economic feasibility of establishing a railway network connecting the GCC States. The Supreme Council directed the competent ministerial committees to continue the study of these two vital projects and expedite the submission of their recommendations to the Supreme Council.

The Supreme Council reviewed the report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the GCC and the Republic of Yemen, the outcomes of joint meetings held between the two sides during the current year and the outcome of the donors' conference held under the auspices of the GCC in London on 15 and 16 November 2006, which had been able to mobilize most of the resources necessary for funding the needs of Yemen in the near future and laid the necessary groundwork for coordination and consultation to promote partnership between the Republic of Yemen and the donor community, above all the GCC States.

In the context of economic relations between the GCC States, other States and international groups, the Supreme Council reviewed developments during 2006 and the conduct of negotiations for the establishment of free trade zones between GCC States and a number of States and economic groupings. It expressed its satisfaction with the progress being made in these negotiations.

In the area of human and environmental affairs, the Supreme Council reviewed the follow-up report submitted by the Secretariat on steps taken by member States to implement a uniform system of insurance protection for GCC State nationals working abroad in other member States, and the cost of the efforts made in this regard.

In keeping with the importance that it attaches to protecting the marine environment from pollution and conserve natural resources in the GCC States, the Council emphasized the importance of expediting the completion of reception facilities for ship ballast water to those States with such projects still in the implementation stage, as the Gulf area had been designated a special maritime area, and the importance of the accession by the remaining GCC States to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution by Ships (MARPOL) on the protection of the marine environment.

In keeping with the desire of the Council to achieve the goals of complementary health care for GCC States and access to safe, effective medicine at reasonable prices, the Council agreed to standardize the prices of medicines imported into GCC States by the private sector, based on a single currency.

The Supreme Council reviewed the report of the Secretariat on follow-up steps taken with regard to the comprehensive development of education and the joint plan to develop public education curricula. It approved the necessary budgets for implementation of some programmes at universities in GCC States.

In the area of legal affairs, the Supreme Council took the following decisions:

1. Adoption of the proposed mechanism to hold periodic meetings of the consultative, parliamentary, national and umma councils under the auspices of GCC;

2. Adoption of the Manama document on a uniform code of civil procedure — legal proceedings — for GCC States, in its amended version, as an indicative code for a period of four years;

3. Adoption of the Abu Dhabi document on a uniform code for combating trafficking in persons in the GCC States, as an indicative code for a period of four years;

4. Extension of the Muscat document on a uniform code for the registration of individual land registration in GCC States, to serve as an indicative code pending its revision.

In the military sphere, the Supreme Council reviewed the outcome of the fifth periodic meeting of the Joint Defence Council. It approved the study submitted to it by the Joint Defence Council on the proposal of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques to develop the Al-Jazeera (Peninsula) Shield force, designed to strengthen, develop and enhance the combat effectiveness of that force, and charged the Secretariat with following up the completion of related studies and arrangements. The Supreme Council also approved other decisions relating to military cooperation in various spheres, the most notable of which related to the continuation and development of military projects and joint periodic exercises.

In the area of security coordination and cooperation, the Supreme Council reviewed progress among member States in the light of the decisions of the twenty-fifth meeting of Ministers of the Interior of the GCC States on mechanisms and procedures to enhance security coordination and cooperation among member States. It expressed its satisfaction with steps taken in this area to protect the growth, stability and prosperity enjoyed by the peoples of the GCC States and to increase communication and contact, emphasizing the importance of completing links for the movement of citizens between GCC States.

In the area of counter-terrorism, the Supreme Council emphasized the firm positions of the GCC States with respect to this dangerous and destructive scourge and their repudiation of terrorism in all forms, whatever its origin or pretext. It noted that terrorism is a universal crime that requires regional and international coordination and cooperation in order to address and combat it, and took the view that terrorism is an extremist ideological phenomenon not affiliated with any religion or identity. The Council emphasized the responsibility of all to confront, intellectually, socially and culturally, the sources of the aberrant idea of labelling others as infidels, which distorts Islam and demeans nations. In this regard, the Supreme Council approved the establishment by the Ministers of the Interior of a permanent counter-terrorism security committee.

With regard to the work of its Advisory Board, the Supreme Council reviewed the Board's views on two topics, namely, economic citizenship and its role in deepening Gulf citizenship, and the importance of economic partnerships in supporting the relationships between GCC States and their neighbours. It decided to approve the views of the Board and refer them to the Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee and other relevant ministerial committees, with a view to establishing mechanisms and drafting the legislation necessary to put them into effect and addressing obstacles in the way of implementing decisions issued in this regard. It also emphasized the importance of implementation of these decisions by the relevant authorities of the GCC States and removal of the restrictions that prevented citizens of GCC States from benefiting from them, in implementation of article 3 of the Economic Agreement between the GCC States, that natural and legal citizens of GCC States in any member State should be treated in all economic activities in the same way as its own citizens, without discrimination.

The Council directed the Board to continue evaluating implementation of these views, as well as the implementation by member States of the related decisions, and to submit a report thereon to the Supreme Council. The Supreme Council also charged the Advisory Board with studying the promotion of appropriate work environments in the private sector to ensure that Gulf companies and investments in GCC States are treated in the same way as national companies and investments. The Advisory Board was asked to submit its views on this issue to the twenty-eighth session of the Supreme Council.

After a comprehensive evaluation of the progress of joint cooperation in all fields, the Supreme Council expressed its satisfaction with what had been achieved, looked forward to further proposals and expressed appreciation of the efforts made by the various ministerial committees. At the same time, the Supreme Council reaffirmed its determination and strong desire to support the gratifying progress towards achieving the aspirations of the citizens of GCC States. The Supreme Council urged the ministerial committees and the relevant authorities in member States to expedite implementation of decisions by adopting necessary legislation and measures and overcoming administrative and bureaucratic obstacles so as to realize as quickly as possible the joint projects, comprehensive development and deepening of Gulf citizenship aspired to by the peoples of the region, and make them a tangible reality embodied not only in a sense of cultural and civilizational affiliation, but also in the exchange of common benefits and interests and everyday interactions between citizens of the region, with a view to instilling in every citizen the conviction that the Council is a reality and a vital necessity.

In this context, the Supreme Council welcomed the decision by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Sultanate of Oman to open the Saudi port of Rub' al-Khali and the Omani port of Ramlat Khayla to facilitate the movement of people and goods, which would promote interaction and develop common interests between the peoples of the two sister countries.

In the political sphere, the Supreme Council discussed overall conditions and the most notable regional, inter-Arab and international political issues. It expressed the positions of the GCC States with respect to them as follows:

On the Iranian question, the Supreme Council discussed the continued occupation by the Islamic Republic of Iran of the three islands, the Greater Tunb,

the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, belonging to the United Arab Emirates. The Council reiterated the following firm positions:

- It supported the right of the United Arab Emirates to the restoration of its sovereignty over its three islands, the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, and over the territorial waters, continental shelf and exclusive economic zone of those three islands, which constitute an integral part of the United Arab Emirates.

- It expressed regret over the failure to achieve any progress through bilateral, regional or international contacts with the Islamic Republic of Iran, or any results that might contribute to resolving this issue and thereby enhancing security and stability in the region.

- It reaffirmed the Ministerial Council's continued consideration of all peaceful means towards the restoration of the right of the United Arab Emirates over its three islands.

- It called on the Islamic Republic of Iran to respond to the efforts of the United Arab Emirates and the international community to resolve the issue through direct negotiations between the two sides or referral of the matter to the International Court of Justice.

- On the Iranian nuclear issue, in keeping with the firm principles of the GCC on respecting international legitimacy and resolving disputes through peaceful means, the Council reaffirmed the need to reach a peaceful resolution of this crisis, and urged Iran to continue international dialogue and cooperate fully in this matter with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

- It expressed concern on the part of the GCC States at the possibility of environmental and human damage and disasters that could be caused by radiation leakage from Iranian nuclear reactors, particularly in the Bushehr area, owing to its proximity to populated areas and vital facilities in the GCC States, and of pollution of waters and localities in the region, obstruction of navigation, disruption of energy sources, the damage this might cause and its implications for the global economy.

- It demanded that Israel accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and subject all of its nuclear facilities to the international inspections regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and urged the international community to apply pressure on Israel to be responsive to the demands of the international community in this regard.

- The Council also reiterated its demand to make the Middle East, including the Gulf region, into a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, while recognizing the right of the States of the region to acquire expertise in the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and affirming that this should be permitted to all within the framework of relevant international agreements.

On the Iraqi issue, the Supreme Council expressed its deep anguish over the deterioration of the situation in Iraq, which was facing bloodshed whose escalating violence was increasing the suffering of the brotherly Iraqi people. It drew attention to the outcome of the emergency meeting of the Ministerial Committee on Iraq held in Cairo on 5 December 2006. The Supreme Council stated the position of the GCC on the situation in Iraq as follows:

- It respected the unity, sovereignty, independence and identity of Iraq, rejected calls for partition, and affirmed the principle of non-interference in Iraq's internal affairs by any party whatsoever attempting to influence its internal affairs for the purpose of achieving goals that do not serve Iraqi national unity or to exert political or cultural influence inside Iraq in a way that tends to perpetuate division and sectarianism and leads to destabilization in the region.

- It believed that national consensus was the key to a solution in Iraq and that national reconciliation among the various sectarian and ethnic components of the Iraqi people was a basic prerequisite for stability in Iraq.

- It condemned the terrorist and criminal acts and the acts of sectarian violence, murder and forced displacement taking place in Iraq that were taking the lives of thousands of innocent Iraqi citizens, expressed profound concern over the breakdown of security, and supported the Iraqi Government in confronting such acts, demanding that the militias be immediately disbanded, and ending the armed lawlessness that was contributing to the increase in tension in Iraq.

- It welcomed the Mecca declaration on Iraq issued on 20 October 2006.

- It affirmed that the security and stability of Iraq could only be achieved through the cooperation of all its citizens without regard to their sectarian, ethnic or religious affiliation, a redoubling of their efforts to put the interest of Iraq ahead of any other consideration, and through the preservation of the unity of Iraq's people and territory.

- It affirmed the importance of preserving the prevailing social balance in Iraq and the interconnected fabric, bonds of kinship and brotherhood that tied together sects and tribes in the various Iraqi regions.

- It once again urged the United Nations to continue its efforts to resolve the outstanding issues of the Kuwaiti national archives and the determination of the fate of remaining prisoners and missing persons of Kuwaiti and other nationalities.

- It stressed the need for Iraq to implement fully all of its obligations in accordance with relevant international instruments and resolutions and establish relations based on good neighbourliness for the realization of security and stability in the region.

The Supreme Council reviewed recent developments in the Palestinian territory and the Middle East peace process, and declared the positions of the GCC States with respect to them as follows:

- It renewed its abhorrence and condemnation of continued Israeli acts of aggression against the Palestinian people and its perpetration of the most vicious massacres against them, the most recent of such crimes being the Beit Hanoun massacre whose victims were innocent civilians including children, the elderly and women.

- The Supreme Council affirmed that the GCC stood by the side of its Palestinian brethren, calling on the international community to move quickly to put an end to these repeated Israeli acts of aggression, and affirmed the need to hold an international conference to put an end to arbitrary Israeli measures

and criminal acts and revive the peace process in accordance with the Arab Peace Initiative, the Road Map and internationally recognized resolutions.

- In this context, the Council welcomed the United Nations General Assembly resolution which, by a large majority, had condemned Israel for the massacre it perpetrated at Beit Hanoun. It also welcomed resolutions related to the rights of the Palestinian people adopted by the Human Rights Council, which convened on 15 November 2006, the effort to make Israel release tax revenues owed to the Palestinian authority, and the international community's effort to remove the siege and suffering being undergone by the brotherly Palestinian people. It also demanded the release of all prisoners in Israeli occupation prisons.

- The Supreme Council also called on the Palestinian leadership to make greater efforts to promote Palestinian accord and expedite the formation of a Palestinian government of national unity that made unity of purpose a priority, in order to enable the Palestinian people to achieve internal security and stability.

- The Council also affirmed that a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East would only come about through the establishment of an independent viable Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital, and Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Arab Golan to the line of 4 June 1967, as well as from the Shab'a farmlands in the South of Lebanon.

- In this context, the Council welcomed the ceasefire between the Palestinians and Israelis as an important step in the right direction, towards dialogue and a resumption of the peace process, stressing the importance of the parties adhering to that agreement and hoping that it would put a stop to acts of violence and counter-violence, bring about stability, open the way for the formation of a Palestinian national unity government, and help lift the unjust siege being imposed on the Palestinian people.

- The Council concluded that the lack of a just solution to the Palestinian problem and the vast suffering being borne by the Palestinian people, which exceeded the bounds of imagination, was the true cause of the worsening and multiplying conflicts in the Middle East. The Council demanded that the international community give the highest priority to reaching a just solution to that problem in accordance with the principles of international legitimacy, because temporary solutions or partial settlements were neither adequate nor acceptable if the region was to enjoy the blessings of security and stability.

The Supreme Council reviewed the tragic developments in Lebanon and expressed the positions of the GCC States with regard to that matter as follows:

- It strongly condemned the return to the cycle of violence and political assassinations in Lebanon with the murder of Lebanese Minister of Industry Pierre Gemayel, and conveyed its condolences to the family of the departed, the Lebanese Government and the brotherly Lebanese people.

- It affirmed that the continuation of such terrorist acts would deepen political tensions, increase the violence of disputes among Lebanese political factions and forces, and provide opportunities to those who bore ill will towards brotherly Lebanon.

- The GCC States would continue to provide political and economic support to Lebanon, including for reconstruction. The Council welcomed the Paris III Lebanon reconstruction conference to be held the following year.

- It stressed the need for all Lebanese to work towards unity of purpose in Lebanon, to strengthen security and stability, and allow legitimacy, reason, wisdom and the language of dialogue to prevail in order to overcome current conditions whose perpetuation would damage Lebanon's stability, national unity and independent political will.

- The Council expressed its hope that the truth would be discovered and that those who had committed these terrorist acts would be found and brought to justice. The Council called on all sides to cooperate in this regard.

On the Sudanese issue, the Supreme Council reviewed developments and affirmed the following:

- It expressed sadness at the continued human suffering in the Darfur region.

- The Supreme Council urged the Government and Sudanese factions to have recourse to the language of dialogue and put brotherly Sudan's higher national interests first.

- In this context, the Council called on the international community to make the utmost efforts to provide assistance to the Sudan to reach a peaceful resolution of the crisis in the Darfur region, particularly in view of the fact that the Sudanese Government had taken many positive steps in this direction.

- In this regard, the Supreme Council appreciated the efforts made by the League of Arab States, the African Union and the United Nations to find a solution that would spare the Sudan from diplomatic and economic confrontations with the international community.

With regard to the situation in Somalia, the Supreme Council reviewed ongoing developments, including the continued conflict and series of crises between the Government of Somalia and the Union of Islamic Courts. The Council called on the Somali parties to the conflict to have recourse to negotiations and dialogue so that the brethren in Somalia could reach a consensual solution that put an end to their disputes, restored security and stability to their country and spared it from further division and suffering.

The Supreme Council conveyed its gratitude and appreciation to Major General `Ali bin Salim al-Ma`mari for the efforts he made during his term as Assistant Secretary-General for Military Affairs for the preceding six years, which saw the establishment of the GCC Joint Defence Council and other new arrangements and mechanisms for military cooperation among the member States.

The Council welcomed Brigadier General Khalifah Hamid Sa`id al-Ka`bi, of the United Arab Emirates armed forces, as the new Assistant Secretary-General for Military Affairs.

The Supreme Council expressed its congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General-elect of the United Nations, and wished him success in achieving the lofty goals of the Organization and the aspirations of the peoples of the world for security and stability.

The Supreme Council also praised the great efforts made by His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations during his term as leader of the Organization and his work in performing the momentous tasks in pursuit of the lofty goals of the Organization and the aspirations of the peoples of the world to security, stability and prosperity.

Finally, the Supreme Council expressed its utmost appreciation and gratitude for the sincere and devoted efforts made by His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, and by his wise Government during his Chairmanship of the twenty-sixth session of the Supreme Council, and the important achievements he accomplished that expanded the fields and horizons of GCC cooperation, and brought greater progress and prosperity to the peoples of the region.

The Supreme Council also expressed its utmost appreciation and gratitude to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Chairman of the current session of the Supreme Council, and to his Government and magnanimous people for the generous hospitality and genuine fraternal sentiments with which the leaders of GCC States had been received. The leaders also took note of the attention, care and wise administration bestowed on the meeting by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Chairman of the current session of the Supreme Council, which had had a major influence on the important results and decisions that had been produced. They expressed their confidence that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, during its chairmanship of the current session under the leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, would contribute to promoting the auspicious GCC process and guiding it towards wider and more comprehensive horizons, while taking into account prevailing local, regional and international conditions, so as to bring about security, stability and prosperity for the peoples of the GCC States.

The Supreme Council looks forward to reconvening for its twenty-eighth session, scheduled to be held in the Sultanate of Oman in Dhu'lqa'da/Dhu'lhijjah A.H. 1428, corresponding to December A.D. 2007, at the kind invitation of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said, Sultan of Oman.

Riyadh

Sunday, 19 Dhu'lqa'da A.H. 1427, corresponding to 10 December A.D. 2006